

Helps and Hints

Family Child Care Newsletter

All About Birds.....

Birds are warm blooded animals. They have wings, feathers, and a beak (but no teeth). They have strong, hollow bones and a powerful set of flight muscles. Most birds can fly. Birds have a strong heart and an efficient way of breathing. They use a great deal of energy while flying and need to eat a lot of food to power their flight. While most birds do fly, some travel by swimming (such as penguins), and some run on their two legs. The ostrich is the fastest two-legged runner on earth, but it cannot fly. Flying birds wings are shaped to provide lift, allowing them to fly. Flying allows them to hunt other animals, escape from predators (like cats), and takes them away from harsh winters through migration. There are different types of feathers. Flight feathers grow on the wing and the tail, soft down feathers grow close to the skin to keep birds from getting too hot or too cold, and colored courtship displays help birds find a mate.

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Look What's Coming....

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2005 Fall Training Opportunities

Tracking Migrations

The Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and the Direct Readout Group at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center are working together on a project to monitor the migration routes of several endangered species using satellite tracking. From tiny transmitters strapped on the back of a bird, signals are uplinked to NOAA satellites, downlinked to ground stations, and finally to wildlife researchers. The data helps scientists better understand and protect endangered species of the world. Find out more at http://outside.gsfc.nasa.gov/ISTO/satellite_tracking/birds_home2.html.

Let's Go For A Walk

Walks are a wonderful way to explore the outdoor environment with children. Ask a friend along to hold little hands and plan ahead to look for interesting sites in the neighborhood. What places in your area would make good homes for birds? Do you have a neighbor with martin boxes? Is there an interesting stand of trees where birds gather each spring? Or a pond with ducks the children could feed? On your walk notice things around you and talk with the children about them. Encourage them to pay attention to birds they see and places they think birds might be. Take along a camera to record interesting finds and make a picture book from them to share with parents.

Ask parents to bring paper towel rolls for the children to make binoculars. Each child can decorate two tubes any way he or she likes, using markers or paint—whatever you have on hand. Tape them together and children can look through them and pretend they are ornithologists (a person who studies birds).



Art-Creativity

Duck Decoys

Using baker's clay, let children form duck shapes, or roll the dough flat and let them cut cookies out with duck-shaped cookie cutters. After they are baked and cooled, let children paint them. You will need:

Flour, salt, a bowl, spoon, paint, paintbrushes, cookie cutters, cookie sheets, rolling pins, water.

Mix 2 cups of flour and 1 cup of water in a bowl, add 1 cup of salt. Stir. Shape as desired.

Place the ducks on a cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for about 10 minutes. Let children paint them when they are cool, and when they are dry encourage them to make a "pond" with blocks and play with their ducks. Encourage them to consider what wild ducks might do.

Feather Painting

Provide a variety of feathers for children to use, such as those from feather dusters. Try to include a variety of sizes. Pour some paint out into a shallow container. Let children dip their feathers into the paint and use different strokes to paint on their paper. Let them use both the fluffy end and the pointy end. Show them how people would dip the end of a quill in ink to write with before we had ink pens.

Hand Print Swans

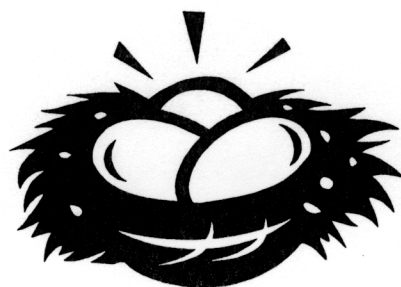
Using white tempera paint, let children paint the surface of their hand and press onto blue construction paper. When these are dry, add an orange triangle for the beak (facing the direction of the wrist). Older children can cut these swans out, punch a hole in the back, and string on ribbon or yarn to hang from a mobile.



Art-Creativity

Bird's Nests

Explain to children that since it is spring, the birds are returning to our area and will be making nests for their homes. They sleep in these nests and lay eggs in them, sitting on the eggs until they hatch. Once the eggs hatch, the nests are home for the baby birds until they learn to fly. You can make a bird nesting bag with your children to help the birds find material for their new homes. You will need a mesh bag such as the type onions come in. Have children gather a variety of material which birds might use to build a nest. Include natural materials such as bits of grass, twigs, and other materials like cotton balls, bits of string, yarn pieces, and scraps of fabric. Let children place their materials in the mesh bag. Tie the bag shut and hang it in a place outdoors which is high enough for the birds to feel safe visiting. They will pull materials out of the bag bit by bit to use in building their nests. Let children check the bag every few days to see if anything is missing, or if new bird's nests appear with their material.



Paper Bag Nests

Talk to your group about the kind of things birds like to use to make their nests. Remind them that birds like small twigs and soft things to keep the eggs safe and warm. Give each child a brown paper lunch sack and help them roll it down from the top to make a nest shape. Let them paint the inside of the sack, sides and bottom, with glue, and place items they have gathered to make their nest. Let dry. Create robin's eggs by mixing 1 cup flour, 1/3 cup salt and 1/2 cup water to make a stiff dough. Roll small pieces of the dough into egg shapes. Bake at 200 degrees for several hours to dry. Mix some blue and white paint together to make light blue paint for the children to paint their robin's eggs before they put them in the nest.

Art-Creativity



Toddler Bird Nests

You will need: brown coffee filters, green Easter grass, small plastic Easter eggs, and glue. Let each child have a coffee filter to serve as a base, and a handful of grass to glue inside to make a bird's nest. Let them choose their own color of eggs to place inside the nest. When this dries let children play with them.

Shape Feely Bags

Use a small cloth bag or a very large sock. Let children look at plastic figures of different types of birds, then place one in the bag. Pass around the bag and let children each have a turn to feel inside and guess what kind of bird it is. Talk about the attributes of the bird they are feeling. Does it have a long neck? Or long legs? What kind of bill or beak does it have? What kind of bird looks like that?

Caged Bird

For school age children, copy this bird picture or another you like, and let children color it with markers, then cut it out. You will need flour, water, several bowls, a balloon for each child, and a skein of yarn. Make a simple glue from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour and 2 cups of water. Blow up a balloon. Dip a few feet of yarn into the flour glue, let the excess drip off, and wrap it around the balloon. Repeat until there is enough yarn wrapped around the balloon to look like a cage. After the glue is dried (which may take several days), pop the balloon and throw it away. Attach a length of string to the cage from which to hang it. Tape a shorter piece of string to the bird and hang it from the top of the cage.



Art-Creativity

Happy Bird Day Card (For School Age Children)

For this project you will need 2 pieces of construction paper, glue, scissors, and colors or markers.

1. Fold a piece of paper in half. Cut a line about 2 inches long across the middle of the crease.
2. Fold back each of the flaps to make 2 triangles. Open the card and smooth it out flat.
3. Push the triangles up from the bottom as you fold it shut again.
4. Fold another piece of paper in half, then glue the two pieces of paper together flat. Be careful not to put the glue around the beak area.
5. When you open the card, the triangles should pop open like a beak. Draw a bird face around the beak. Decorate the rest of the card any way you would like.



Little Red Hen

You will need: One red disposable plastic cup per child, a roll of string (cotton twine, not thread), a kitchen sponge, a permanent marker, and (optional) 2 googly eyes per child.

An adult should cut the sponge into rectangles about 1 inch by 2 inches. Cut a piece of twine about 8 to 12 inches long. Punch a hole in the top of each cup with an ice pick. Have children thread their string through the top, and tie one rectangle of sponge on each end of the string. Turn the cup upside down. Wet the sponge at the bottom slightly, grip it tightly around the twine midway down (holding the cup in one hand) and pull down in small short bursts. This should make a "bawk-bawk" sound like a chicken. Use the permanent marker to make a chicken face on the outside of the cup, and glue on googly eyes if you like.

Art-Creativity

Beautiful Doves

You will need: 1/2 sheet of stiff paper, 1 sheet light weight paper, scissors, markers, string, tape, glitter if desired.

1. Draw a bird shape on the half sheet of stiff paper. Cut a 1 inch slit near the tail, and a 1 inch slit near the shoulder area.
2. Cut the light weight paper in half, then with 1 inch accordion folds, make a fan with each half sheet.
3. Slide the folded paper through the slits in the bird and center the folded paper for the tail and for the wings, spreading paper out.
4. Tape a piece of string to the section just behind the wings to hang from a doorway or a coat hanger to create a mobile. Let children decorate their doves any way they choose.

Quiet Ring Toss

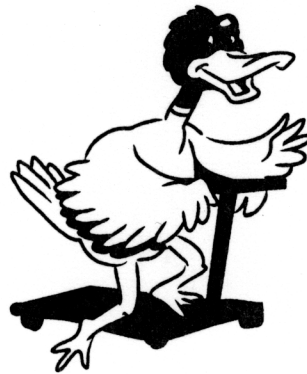
Cut the middle out of large plastic coffee can lids and wrap the outer circles with colored pantyhose. Secure ends of hose. Glue a plastic 20 oz bottle to a scrap of cardboard. Place the cardboard on the floor and mark a spot 2-4 feet away for children to stand and toss the rings.



Sing, Song, Sway

Little Chick

Snuggled down inside
An egg that was white
Was a tiny little chick
With its head tucked in tight.
Then it lifted its head,
Tapped the egg with its beak,
And quickly popped out—
Peep, peep, peep!



Little Egg

(sung to Yankee
Doodle)

Once there was a little egg
That jumped down to the floor.
It started rolling all around,
Then rolled right out the door.
Little egg roll, roll, roll.
Roll all around.
Little egg roll, roll, roll,
All across the ground.



Little Chicks

(sung to Ten Little Indians)

Hear the little chicks
Cheeping in the barnyard.
Hear the little chicks
Cheeping in the barnyard.
Hear the little chicks
Cheeping in the barnyard.
Cheep-cheep-cheep-cheep-cheep!

See the little chicks
Pecking in the barnyard.
See the little chicks
Pecking in the barnyard.
See the little chicks
Pecking in the barnyard.

Sing, Song, Sway

Two Little Blackbirds

Two little blackbirds

Sitting on a hill

(make fists)

One named Jack, the other named Jill.

(raise one thumb, then the other)

Fly away Jack!

(fly one thumb behind back)

Fly away Jill!

(fly other thumb behind back)

Come back Jack!

(fly one thumb back)

Come back Jill!

(fly other thumb from behind back)

(This song is fun to do with the names of the children in the group instead of Jack and Jill.)

Birds Flying

(to the tune of Did You Ever See a Lassie)

Oh can you see the birds fly, the birds fly,
the birds fly,

Oh can you see the birds fly way up in the
sky?

They sleep in their nests when they come
home to rest.

Oh can you see the birds fly way up in the
sky?

Move Like the Birds

(to the tune of This is the Way.....)

This is the way the birdies fly, birdies fly,
birdies fly.

This is the way the birdies fly so early in
the morning.

This is the way they dig for worms, dig for
worms, dig for worms.

This is the way they dig for worms, so
early in the morning.

This is the way they sit in the nest, sit in
the nest, sit in the nest.

This is the way they sit in the nest, so
early in the morning.

Sing, Song, Sway

"If you want any breakfast, you just come here and scratch!"

(Hold up the appropriate number of fingers for each verse. Scratch with fingers for the last verse.)

Five Little Chickens

Said the first little chicken with a funny little squirm,

"Oh, I wish I could find a fat little worm!"

Said the second little chicken with an odd little shrug,

"Oh, I wish I could find a fat little bug!"

Said the third little chicken with a little sigh of grief,

"Oh, I wish I could find a green little leaf!"

Said the fourth little chicken with a sharp little squeal,

"Oh, I wish I could find some nice yellow meal!"

Said the fifth little chicken with a faint little moan,

"Oh, I wish I could find a wee gravel stone!"

"Now see here!" said their mother from the green garden patch,

Five Little Ducks

Five little ducks went swimming one day,
Over the pond and far away.

Mama Duck said "Quack, quack, quack, quack!"

Only four little ducks came swimming back.

(repeat for four, three, two, and one....)

No little ducks came swimming back.

Mama Duck went swimming one day, over the pond and far away.

Mama Duck said "Quack, quack, quack, quack!"

And five little ducks came swimming back!

Sing, Song, Sway

Over in the Meadow

(Tune is traditional)

Over in the meadow in the sand and the sun,
Lived an old mother frog and her little froggie
one.

"Croak!" said the mother, "I croak!" said the
one.

So they croaked and they croaked in the sand
and the sun.

Over in the meadow, in the stream so blue,
Lived an old mother fish and her little fishies
two.

"Swim!" said the mother, "We swim!" said the
two.

So they swam and they swam in the stream so
blue.

Over in the meadow, on the branch of a tree,
Lived an old mother bird and her little birdies
three.

"Sing!" said the mother, "We sing!" said the
three.

So they sang and they sang on the branch of
the tree.

Sing a Song of Sixpence

(Nursery Rhyme)

Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,
Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.
When the pie was opened, the birds began to
sing.

Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before the
king?

The king was in his counting house, counting
out his money.

The queen was in the parlor, eating bread and
honey.

The maid was in the garden hanging out the
clothes.

Along came a blackbird and bit her on the
nose!

Robin Redbreast

(Nursery rhyme)

Little Robin Redbreast sat upon a rail.

Sing, Song, Sway

I'm a Little Birdie

(to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

I'm a little birdie, small and brown.
I fly up high and then fly down.
Watch me land up in the tallest tree.
I'll sing a song for you and me!

Learning to Fly

(to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle)

Flying birds up in the sky,
How did you get up so high?
When you learned was it so hard?
Did you fall down in the yard?
You must have practiced every day
Then you could just fly away.



The Green Grass Grew All Around

(Tune is traditional)

Oh in the woods, there was a tree,
The prettiest tree, you ever did see.
Oh the tree was in the hole,
and the hole in the ground,
and the green grass grew all around,
all around, and the green grass grew all
around.

Now on that tree, there was a branch, the
prettiest branch, you ever did see.

Oh the branch was on the tree and the tree in
the hole, and the hole in the ground..

(continue chorus)

And on that branch, there was a nest,
the prettiest nest, you ever did see...

Oh, the nest was on the branch and the branch
on the tree and the tree in the hole...etc.

And in that nest, there was a bird, the
prettiest bird, you ever did see.

And the bird was in the nest, and the nest on
the branch, and the branch on the tree,
and the tree in the hole, and the hole in the
ground, and the green grass grew all around, all
around, and the green grass grew all around.

Did You Know?

Coping With The Strong-Willed Child

Do you have a strong-willed child in your care? Celebrate! Being strong willed is a useful character trait which may lead a child to success later in life! However, having a young child oppose your every wish can be a real challenge for a child care provider. It is normal for all children to pass through stages where they refuse reasonable requests and seem defiant. Here are some suggestions for those children who continually show stubborn behavior.

1. **Avoid unnecessary demands.** Don't ask the child to do something you are not prepared to follow through on. If there is something you would like the child to do, but it is not a requirement, offer the child a choice and be willing to accept it if she does not make the choice you wish. Children who are given choices often are less likely to be stubborn.
2. **Try not to issue challenges.** Give the child information rather than commands. An example: "Bottoms belong on the chairs" rather than "Get down off that chair!"
3. **Be very clear about your "absolutes" and be prepared to insist.** "You may not hit. I will stop you if you try again."
4. **When you must enforce a demand, don't let protests stop you.** Let the child express her feelings and help her control her behavior. "I know you are angry. That's OK. But we have to come inside now." (Carry her if you must. Giving in and waiting "Five more minutes" only rewards protests.)
5. **Pay attention to the child more often when she is behaving appropriately.** Play with her and the dolls while she is playing nicely, don't wait until she is misbehaving to give her the attention she needs.
6. **Don't rule by fear.** Be gentle and firm. Let her know you are here to help.

Keep your cool even when she loses hers. An adult who is calm is a better teacher



Give the child chances to be in control—like with dolls or puppets!

Safe Kids...Healthy Kids

Lead Poisoning and Young Children

What is Lead Poisoning?

Lead poisoning is the damage caused by too much lead in the body. Even small amounts of lead can interfere with a child's learning and behavior. Large amounts may cause serious damage to the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells.

Why are young children more at risk?

Young children are at greatest risk for lead poisoning because of their natural curiosity and hand-to-mouth activity. They are exposed to many sources of lead in their normal environment and absorb a high proportion of the lead to which they are exposed, especially if their diets are low in iron or calcium.

Where are children exposed to lead?

Most lead poisoning comes from paint when paint chips or dust is swallowed. Many homes built before the mid 1970's still have layers of lead based paint. Children become lead poisoned from eating, chewing, or sucking on lead painted surfaces or items coated with lead dust such as railings, window wells and sills, toys, furniture, and jewelry. Children are easily lead poisoned if they are around old buildings that are being renovated or redecorated. Children touching things with sticky fingers are likely to pick up the contaminated dust or material. Soil, particularly next to buildings or garages is another source, where contaminated dust has fallen and children dig or play in the soil, get it on their hands, and transfer it to their mouth.

How is lead poisoning diagnosed?

The child's doctor or health department can conduct a simple finger-stick blood screening. If results indicate levels of lead are too high, it should be followed by a venous blood test (drawing blood).



Remind parents—a simple blood test can screen for lead exposure.

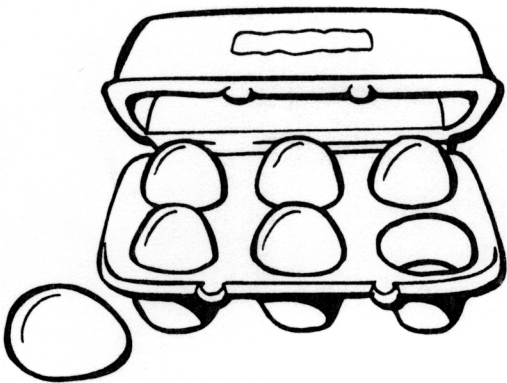
Cooking and Children Mix Well

Rice Cake Creatures

You will need:

Miniature rice cakes, peanut butter, raisins, pretzel sticks, sliced almonds, green grapes, cream cheese, plates, butter knives, bowls for ingredients, plenty of napkins.

Let children each have several rice cakes. Explain that they can use the fruit, nuts, and pretzels to create shapes of birds. An easy one to start with is an owl. Use two rice cakes. Cut a notch from the top of one cake, which will make it look like the tufts of feathers of a great horned owl (explain that these are not really ears, just feathers, the ears are hidden further down on the owl's head.) Spread the cakes with peanut butter and place raisins on the top one for the eyes and a sliver of almond for the beak. Pretzels might be used for the feet. See what other bird shapes you can create! (Note: whole grapes and nuts are for children over 4 only!)



Egg Drop Soup

You will need:

Sauce pan, chicken broth, bowl, two eggs, egg beater (hand crank if you have one).

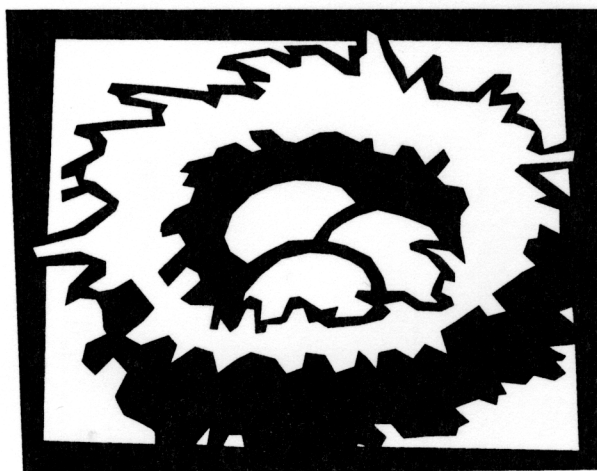
Bring chicken broth to a boil on the stove while children have a turn to beat the eggs in the bowl. Stir the boiling broth quickly while adding the egg.

Let cool and serve.

Cooking and Children Mix Well

Bird's Nest Salads

Cut carrots in half and let the children help grate them. For each serving, mix together one half of a grated carrot and 1/4 cup show mein noodles. Stir in mayonnaise to moisten. Place the mixture on a plat and push the back of a spoon down into the middle to form a nest. Let the children place grapes or peas in the nests for "eggs". If desired, serve the nests on top of lettuce leaves.



When snacktime is over, let your children help gather up the crumbs and scatter them around outside for the birds to eat.

Winter Treats for Birds

Help the children make these winter treats for birds.

Orange or Grapefruit Cup. Punch four holes near the top of an empty orange or grapefruit rind. Attach it to a tree limb with string. Fill the rind with seeds or nuts. Let the children eat the grapefruit or orange as a snack.

Bread Ornament. Cut a slice of stale bread into a circle or other shape with a cookie cutter. Mix food coloring with hardened fat and spread it on both sides of the bread. Make a hole near the top of the shape and tie it to a tree limb with string.

Suet Bag. Cut a 6-inch square of net from a potato or onion bag. Mix suet with birdseed and place a large spoonful of the mixture in the center of the netting. Bring the corners of the square together and tie with a string. Then fasten the suet bag to a tree branch.

Stories, Rhymes and Jingles

Birds of a Feather

Birds of a feather,
Will flock together,
And so will pigs and swine.
Rats and mice
Will have their choice,
And so will I have mine.

And he who lies late,
Will never be wise.
For early to bed,
And early to rise,
Is the way to be healthy,
And wealthy, and wise.

When a Yellow Duck

When a yellow duck walks down the street,
(Hold up hand)
Quack! Goes his bill. *(Open and close
thumb and index finger)*
Waddle! Go his feet. *(Waddle hand back
and forth)*
He comes to a puddle with a bound, *(Form
circle with opposite arm)*
In goes the yellow duck and he swims
around! *(Jump hand into circle and move it
around).*

Cock Crow

Cocks crow in the morning,
To tell us to rise,

Five Little Sparrows

Five little sparrows high in a tree.
(Hold one hand up.)
The first one said "Whom do I see?"
(Point to thumb)
The second one said "I see the street."
(Pointer finger)
The third one said "And there are seeds to
eat."
(Middle finger)
The fourth one said "And the seeds are
wheat."
(Ring finger)
The fifth one said "Tweet, tweet, tweet!"
(Little finger)

Stories, Rhymes, and Jingles

Bird Jokes for Older Children

Why did the chicken cross the road?

To get to the other side!

Why did the turkey cross the road?

It was the chicken's day off!

If a rooster lays an egg on the middle of a slanted roof, on which side will the egg roll?

Neither, roosters don't lay eggs!

What do you get when you cross a parrot with a shark?

A bird that talks your ear off!

Why do hummingbirds hum?

Because they forgot the words!

How do you get down off an elephant?

You don't, you get down off a duck!

What is a chick after she's 6 days old?

Seven days old!

What does a duck like to eat with soup?

Quackers!

Why did the owl say "Tweet, tweet"?

Because she didn't give a hoot!

Why does a flamingo stand on one leg?

Because if he lifted that leg off the ground he would fall over!

Which side of a parrot has the prettiest feathers?

The outside!

Where does a peacock go when it loses its tail?

A re-tail store!

What do you give a sick bird?

Tweetment!

Why do birds fly south for the winter?

Because it's too far to walk!

Why do seagulls live near the sea?

Because if they lived near the bay

Stories, Rhymes and Jingles

Little Chicken

When a little chicken eats,
She scampers all around,
Picking up here and there
Dinner from the ground.

(Make pecking movements with head.)

When a little chicken drinks,
She stands very still,
While water trickles down
Through her upturned bill.

(hold head back and stroke throat.)

I Can Be Any Animal

(Perform actions as rhyme indicates.)

I can hop like a rabbit,
I can jump like a frog.
I can waddle like a duck,
I can run like a dog.
I can fly like a bird,
I can swim like a fish
I can be any animal that I wish!

Once I Saw a Little Bird

Once I saw
A little bird
Go hop,
Hop, hop.
And I called,
"Little bird!
Will you stop,
Stop stop?"

I was opening
The window
To say,
"How do you do?"
But he shook
His little tail
And far away
He flew.

Five Little Robins

Five little robins waiting for spring.

(Hold up 5 fingers.)

The first little robin started to sing.

(Point to thumb.)

The second little robin flapped its wings.

(Point to index finger.)

The third little robin said "tweet tweet
tweet!"

Stories, Rhymes and Jingles

(Point to middle finger.)

The fourth little robin sang so sweet.

(Point to ring finger.)

The fifth little robin said "It's a beautiful day"

(Point to little finger.)

Then all five robins flew away.

(Fly hand behind back.)

Two Birds on a Wire

Two tall telephone poles

(Hold up both pointer fingers)

Between them a wire is strung.

(Form wire by placing thumb tips together.)

Two little birds hopped on the wire,

(Lower tips of middle fingers to thumbs.)

And swung, swung, swung!

(With fingers in position, swing hands back and forth.)

Five Little Birds

Five little birds peeping at the door,

(Hold up 5 fingers)

One flew away, and that left four.

(Bend down thumb.)

Four little birds, sitting on a tree,

One flew away, and that left three.

(Bend down pointer finger.)

Three little birds, looking at you,

One flew away, and that left two!

(Bend down middle finger.)

Two little birds, sitting in the sun,

One flew away and that left one.

(Bend down ring finger.)

One little bird, left all alone,

It flew away, and that left none!

(Bend down little finger.)

The Green Grass Grows All Around

There was a tree. (Echo)

All in the wood. (Echo)

The prettiest little tree. (Echo)

That you ever did see. (Echo)

The tree in a hole, and the hole in the ground,

And the green grass grew all around, all around,

And the green grass grew all around.

And on that tree. (Echo)

Extras

Language Activities

Bird Sounds. Make bird sounds by whistling or chirping. Ask your children to listen carefully and try to imitate the sounds.

Carpet Flannelboard. For a quick flannelboard alternative, simply use a carpet square. The felt figures will stick to the carpet just as well as they stick to flannel.

Interactive Storytime. Read or tell a story about chicks, ducks, or other birds. Whenever your children hear the names of the birds, have them make cheeping, quacking, or other bird sounds.

Describing Eggs. Over separate bowls, crack open a raw egg and a hard-cooked egg. Ask your children to tell how the eggs are alike and how they are different.

Movement Activities

Bird Moves. Have your children pretend to be birds. Play music and let them "fly" around the room, flapping their wings as they go. Occasionally, have them stop flying and hop around, looking for pretend food to eat.

Hatching Chicks. Have your children crouch down near the floor, pretending to be chicks inside eggs. Have them peck at their pretend shells until the shells break open. Then let the newly hatched "chicks" scamper around the room, cheeping and flapping their wings.

Feathery Birds. Set out feathers (available at craft stores). Have each child cut a large bird shape from construction paper. Have the children brush glue on their shapes. Then let them place the feathers on top of the glue to make feathery birds.